

There is no question, as my friend from New York just referenced previously, that our image has been tattered and beaten abroad. That is no less true here in the Western Hemisphere, especially with our neighbors to the south, through Central and South America. And I have always believed that our trade policies are more than just the exchange of products and goods between our Nation and others but also an important tool in our diplomatic arsenal. An arsenal that needs to be rebuilt now even in our own Western Hemisphere.

But I also want to remind my colleagues that this is not a free pass for these four Andean nations to get this trade preference. They have certain strict criteria that they have to meet first to gain eligibility for these preferences. Criteria such as respecting internationally recognized worker rights, treating the United States investors fairly, providing market access to U.S. goods, demonstrating a commitment to implement its WTO obligations, and, finally, to meet the U.S. counter-narcotics criteria.

And on that last point, it is not insignificant that there has been substantial progress, according to our own State Department and USTR office, of the drug eradication efforts and partnership that we have established with these four Andean nations. They have also met the criteria, again, through reference of our own State Department, but ATPA is perhaps the single most effective alternative development program we have going in the region. By providing these local citizens with long-term alternatives to narcotics trafficking and illegal immigration, ATPA has helped the governments, especially in Colombia and Peru, to isolate violent extremist groups; to revise their economies; and increase their investments in their education, health care, and infrastructure system.

And I submit that if we are not trying to actively engage these nations to help them build their economy and expand economic opportunities, they are going to come to the United States to realize those opportunities that they are not receiving in their own countries.

That is why I encourage my colleagues to support this extension.

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, I now would like to yield 2 minutes to a very valued Member of this body, and we came to this institution together, Ms. KAPTUR of Ohio.

Ms. KAPTUR. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the chairman's yielding me the time even though I rise in opposition to this bill and to any bill that will continue to outsource more U.S. jobs, increase our trade deficit, and not stop the import of illegal narcotics into this country.

This is another one of those bills cast in NAFTA model that is already yielding over \$10 billion a year in trade defi-

cits to this country by the outsourcing of our jobs. Why would we want to do more?

The American people elected us to make a difference. They are expecting us to be different than the Thomas committee. Why are we delivering the same kind of bills to this floor?

Procedurally, this bill is being brought up overnight without Members even having the opportunity to read a text. I don't know who made that decision. I doubt it was anyone on this floor. But for people who represent districts like ours, it is truly a tragedy.

One fact we are certain of is that NAFTA-type agreements have cost more jobs, more job losses, more trade deficit every time one of these bills comes to the floor. When are we going to learn?

The idea of the Andean agreement was that it would help to displace coca production with other economic enterprises, and yet we see coca production increasing and more of those illegal drugs coming over our border. When something isn't working, you ought to fix it.

We look at the provisions dealing with labor enforcement. There is no enforcement, especially in the farm-related positions, in the flour industry, in the asparagus industry, and so forth. There is no enforcement in those countries. Why would we do this?

I would love to be a Member of this Congress when a trade agreement is advanced that creates jobs in the United States of America, which is our first responsibility, rather than outsourcing; that yields trade surpluses, not growing deficits that are such a huge drag on this economy, now knocking two points off GDP every year; and that treats the Members of this institution with respect, with respect. Not excluding those who disagree, but putting us around the table, letting our voices be heard, letting us be constructive Members of this institution.

□ 1845

I would say to the leadership of this institution, treat the Members with respect. We were also elected.

I thank the gentleman for allowing me this time to speak in opposition.

Mr. HERGER. Mr. Speaker, I would just like to mention that the United States is the number one trading Nation in the world. Because of the great trade that we have, we have one of the lowest unemployment rates of any Nation in the world, 4.5 percent.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Texas, a member of the Ways and Means Committee, a very active member of the Trade Subcommittee (Mr. BRADY).

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this bill which would provide a short-term extension of current trade preferences to our Andean neighbors.

I have always supported the Andean trade program designed to help create alternative jobs and economies to

those in the drug trade and to offer hope to these nations.

And it has worked. Millions of jobs have developed in the region in the flower industry, in agriculture, all that contribute to stabilization and economic growth, all of which are in America's interest.

But preferences which are one-way trade into America aren't permanent. They aren't designed that way because they matter. The impact on American asparagus farmers, which has shrunk by a third as a result of these preferences is a good example. And that's why it's imperative that we work with our Andean neighbors to transition to two-way free trade agreements that balance and strengthen our relationships.

Not only is two-way trade fair, but it benefits all parties by encouraging more permanent investment in nations where rule of law, property rights, democracy and higher labor environmental standards are insisted upon. This helps create even more jobs in the legitimate market, more so than the preferences do today.

As an example, Peru's legislature today voted to amend our agreement that incorporates important labor and environmental provisions negotiated by Chairman RANGEL, Ranking Member MCCRERY and others.

Approving the pending free trade agreements with partners Peru and Colombia have significant security and foreign policy implications as well by strengthening our hand against President Chavez in Venezuela and his corrosive influence in the region.

Mr. Speaker, I support the preference extension. We shouldn't disrupt current trade flows or hurt our friends in the region whose livelihoods depend upon this program, but we need to move forward in a timely manner with agreements with Peru and Colombia.

I am hopeful that Ecuador and Bolivia understand that one-way preferences are temporary and require a good faith effort on their part to address outstanding trade and expropriation issues if they wish to continue.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to yield 2 minutes to another distinguished member of the Ways and Means Committee, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BLUMENAUER).

Mr. BLUMENAUER. I appreciate the gentleman's courtesy, as I appreciate what my colleague from Ohio said a moment ago. But with all due respect, I couldn't disagree with her more.

First of all, what is brought here today is not a NAFTA-type agreement. Bear in mind, this is being urged for approval by the Council of Textile Organizations, the Bush administration and the AFL-CIO. It is an 8-month extension for us to be able to move forward in an orderly fashion.

We have, in fact, heard concerns that have been voiced by our friend from Ohio and others. That's why the committee is hard at work. And I commend the leadership of Chairman RANGEL and